

FIRST

Annual Report

OF THE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

Free Religious Association,

PRESENTED AT A MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION IN BOSTON,
MAY 28, 1868.

BY THE SECRETARY.

BOSTON:

W. F. BROWN & CO., PRINTERS, NO. 27 CORNHILL.

1868.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

REPORT.

THE Executive Committee of the Free Religious Association, in presenting their first Annual Report, have little to recount in the way of visible practical work, either accomplished or projected. Nor was it to be expected that from an organization so novel in its idea and purpose, so large and inclusive in its scope, and so designedly free and spontaneous in its plan, any very definite and tangible results should be manifest in a single year. It were better even that the Association should appear to have done nothing than that anything should have been done, through a natural impatience to produce some immediate and visible effect, that would have tended to narrow its basis and injure its capacity for a larger and grander work in the future.

And, as one who from the outset was especially interested in the formation of this new Association, the Secretary may here be allowed to put on record the statement, that, so far as he is aware, there was on the part of no one of those having the like interest any desire or thought of forcing into a compact organization, and into a strict community of purpose and action, the various representative religious elements to which they made their appeal for a public meeting; much less did they presume to control, through any formal, mechanical contrivance, the progressive religious spirit of the age, and think to turn it into some special channel. On the contrary, the first premise of all their thinking and acting was, that this spirit must be left perfectly free and untrammelled in order to work out its proper results; and their sole aim was to form some simple plan of association which should represent and give expression to this perfect religious freedom; not prematurely to hasten, nor artificially to shape any natural religious movements that are in progress, but to provide an organism — itself a natural result of these movements — for religious elements that are spontaneously attracted more or less strongly to each other, and that are already prepared for some kind of combination and

fellowship, — an organism that should enable these elements the better to define and express themselves in public sentiment in their united force, and at the same time leave the largest liberty to individual opinion and utterance. There was such entire trust to this general and spontaneous spirit of unity, and such entire freedom from any desire to have an organization that should specially represent the peculiar opinions of any clique or faction of religious believers, that of the Executive Committee, chosen at the convention in Horticultural Hall last May, only a small minority had been present at any of the preliminary meetings for consultation, or knew precisely what was in the minds of those who had most desired organization. The Committee were selected from those who were supposed to have a general and entirely unsectarian interest in religious enlightenment, liberty, and progress, and who would be willing to stand on the broad platform of the Association, which did not stop with the limits of the "Christian" religion. They were, to a considerable extent, personally unacquainted with each other; and before their first official meeting no one of them probably knew definitely what was the opinion of any other concerning the nature and method of the work which had been intrusted to their joint hands.

It seemed necessary to make this statement both to show how unforced and unplanned a movement this organization was, and to explain why no very extensive visible results were to be expected of it in the first year of its existence.

Yet, though your Committee are not able to report any great scheme of work completed or undertaken, they have not been idle; nor have they been unmindful of the important responsibility of the trust committed to them. Though having no head-quarters, no regular place or time of meeting, they have had, during the year, ten sessions; and though the residences of the members are much scattered (the thirteen living in five different States), at seven of these sessions a majority of them have been present. It was evident on their first coming together that the only thing they could do at once was to compare opinions as to what they were appointed to do, — to consult together on the specific objects and means of the Association, and to reach on both these points the best possible judgment they were capable of making before taking any definite action. And to this end the Committee have bestowed individually and collectively much thought and labor. They have sought carefully to survey the field of work before hastily entering it with any newly-contrived machinery. The problem has been, What are the religious wants and aims which this Association has come into existence to supply, and what the best method

of supplying them? And though the Committee may not be able to give, at this time, a full and satisfactory solution of this problem, they may yet claim to have done something towards a future solution. They have been thoughtful observers of public religious events and tendencies, and quite an extensive correspondence has been begun, which must every year increase, with persons interested in the general objects of the Association in all sections of the United States, and also to some extent with persons in England and in India.

And this last remark indicates what has been a main part of the practical work of the Association during this first year. Through this instrumentality of private correspondence, enough has already been learned to justify, to the mind of your Secretary at least, the opinion of those who held that an Association like this was needed. And through the same instrumentality something very real has been done, though not visible to the public eye nor measurable by any common scale of practicality, towards forwarding one of the chief objects of the Association, — that of fraternal communion and fellowship. Persons widely separated in space, and previously wholly unknown to each other, have thus been brought into friendly acquaintance to find themselves of one spiritual brotherhood. And much has been learned in this way of religious tendencies and movements in American society. Last autumn, your Secretary, having become much interested in the accounts of the native religious and moral reform in India, which is known as Brahmoism, and which, without embracing Christianity, attempts to convert the religion of India into pure Theism, determined to write, on behalf of the Free Religious Association, to one of the chief present leaders of that movement, Keshub Chunder Sen, of Calcutta. His letter was most cordially, and even enthusiastically, received by that eminent man, — was regarded as a right hand of fellowship, and its fraternal grasp most affectionately returned. A response recently came from him, which, for breadth and quickness of intelligence, for purity of religious aspiration and aim, for moral sincerity and courage, and for warmth and heartiness of human brotherly love, can have seldom had its equal in the record of Christian epistles. If this Association shall do nothing more than to have called forth such a letter from the world popularly called heathen, and regarded as morally and spiritually lost unless converted to Christianity, it will have done a good service for human brotherhood. Your Secretary's letter, without any expectation on his part, was published in some of the native religious journals of the Theistic sect, which fact brought another reply mainly a letter of inquiry, from a native citizen, a member of a Theistic society in Bombay; so that we are now in communication with

both the east and the west sides of native India. We have also a valuable letter from our American brother, Moncure D. Conway, for several years a resident in England, concerning religious tendencies and movements in that country, which will be read probably at some period of the meeting, and printed among the Proceedings.

The Committee, at their first session, voted to print a pamphlet report of the Proceedings of the Convention in Horticultural Hall, at which the Free Religious Association was organized. They had no funds to do this with, the voluntary collection taken at the door of Horticultural Hall at the close of the meeting there, not having been sufficient to defray the expenses of that meeting. Such a printed report, however, seemed the most direct way for acquainting the public with the existence and objects of the Association; and the Committee of Arrangements for the Convention had provided the materials for it in securing phonographic reports of the addresses in the long session. These were accordingly published together with the constitution of the Association, the Committee trusting mainly to donations to pay the cost. An edition of twenty-five hundred copies was printed, of which about fifteen hundred have been distributed gratuitously, three hundred sold, and seven hundred remain on hand. The copies remaining will be presented to those who may want them at this meeting.

At the session of the Committee in September, the Secretary was directed to make inquiries with regard to the feasibility of providing a course of free religious lectures in Cambridge, to be repeated, if found desirable, in part or wholly, in some other places. This duty the Secretary attended to, and was prepared to report favorably on the proposition at the meeting of the Committee in October. But only a small minority of the Committee was present at that meeting, and no action could be taken. It was necessary, however, if the lectures were to be given in Cambridge, and the course completed within the limits of the college term (which was desirable), that the arrangements should be made for them at once. The Secretary took, therefore, the entire responsibility in the matter, and provided for a course of ten lectures by persons representing progressive and rationalistic views in religion. He did this in his private rather than official capacity; and the Association became in no way responsible for the lectures. The course was free to the public, — the expense being met by private donations. The audiences, though not large, were interested and attentive, and the main object — that of opening such a course of lectures to the students of theology in Cambridge — was successfully reached. Some of

the lectures, with the addition of other speakers, were afterwards given in Boston, though by no action of this Association.

In November, the Committee directed the Secretary to prepare a brief circular letter, expressing their desire to publish essays and discourses for popular distribution, in furtherance of the objects of the Association as expressed in its constitution, and making an appeal for funds for this purpose. The immediate object of this vote was to meet a want in religious publication which none of the existing religious organizations seemed to meet. The Committee desired to provide (in tract form, or otherwise) a series of essays which should consider religious questions from a purely rational, scientific, unsectarian, and undogmatic point of view, though in a thoroughly reverent spirit. This circular was prepared — a small edition of five hundred copies only being printed — and sent to persons supposed to be interested in the object it aimed to set forth. Considering the narrow circulation of this appeal, and that it went mainly among those not largely endowed with material riches, a good response to it was made. A part of the funds thus received were used for printing the "Report" of the meeting in Horticultural Hall last year, a part have been used for printing discourses in tract form, which are now ready for distribution, and a balance remains on hand for future use.

A Sub-committee has also been appointed by the Executive Committee to consider the feasibility of procuring the publication of a volume of essays (somewhat after the manner of the English "Essays and Reviews") which should represent the progressive and advanced religious thought in this country. This Committee found a publisher who, on easy conditions, would undertake the issue of such a volume. But a sufficient number of essays of the right character could not be obtained for the publication of the book this spring. The project, however, is not abandoned, and with perhaps some modification may be carried into execution before another annual meeting. It might be well for this meeting to take some action in the matter, — perhaps by appointing a Committee who should publicly solicit essays, bearing on a certain stated theme, from any persons willing to embrace such an opportunity for setting forth their views, — the same Committee, or another, to be the judge of the fitness for the proposed volume of the essays offered.

And this, with the addition of providing for the Convention in Tremont Temple to-morrow, completes the record of the doings of your Executive Committee for this year. The work may be regarded as merely tentative, and in no wise, either in what has been accomplished or projected, as fixing a standard for future action. The Committee

are, indeed, convinced that what has been actually done in this first year bears no measurable proportion to what the Free Religious Association is capable of doing. And since we have so little of *achievement* to record, it may be well in this first report to speak somewhat of *capabilities*; and thereby we bring up the question of both the objects and the methods of the Association.

The *objects* of the Association are succinctly stated in the first Article of the Constitution. We are organized, according to that Article, "to promote the interests of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit." But we fail to perceive the full bearing of this language, unless we note that this statement of purpose is introduced by the title of the Association, which is "*Free Religious*," and is followed by an invitation to "*all persons* interested in these objects" to become members. The basis of the Association, therefore, is broader than anything before attempted in the way of organization in religious history. It goes below any one specific form of religion, and seeks to find the common ground on which all religions, or more properly religion itself, rests, and plants itself there. It contemplates the ultimate union, not simply of all sects in Christendom, but of all religions, Christian and non-Christian, in one. It looks beyond "Christian" limits for its fellowship. Nor is this aim, even thus early, only ideal. As the meetings last year and this both testify, it is in a measure already realized. And this fact, with what it involves, is the most distinguishing feature of the Association. "With what it involves;" for the important thing is not so much the fact that the Association brings different sects and religions together on one platform, as the principle underlying that fact. This principle is, that in this Association these various religious opinions and faiths meet and mingle *on perfectly equal terms*, no one claiming for itself what it does not cordially accord, by courtesy and by right, to every other. For the first time in religious history, not only representatives of differing Christian sects, but people of all religious names and of no religious name, are invited to come together as equal brothers, and confer with one another on the highest interests of mankind. Most of us here are probably, by reason of birth and education, counted in the census of the world's population as "Christian," whether we make any other claim to the name or not. But on the platform of this Association we do not obtrude that title. We agree here to listen to what our Hebrew friend may have to utter, or to what our India brother may write to us of their respective religious faiths, with the same candor and the same integrity and openness of judgment that we accord to a "Christian" speaker. A believer in the

Christian system of religion may, if his conscience so dictate, use his right to speak on the platform of this Association with the purpose of proving the claims of his particular faith paramount to all others, and of converting non-believers to his views ; but if he does so, that very act commits him to hear impartially the same claims made for any other faith. One who should come here simply to speak with dogmatic and sectarian arrogance for his own belief, and not cordially to listen to what might be said in behalf of another belief, would not come certainly in the spirit of the constitution of this Association.

Let this is not to say that the Free Religious Association takes the ground that one form of religion or of faith is as true and good as another. It simply does not determine the claims of any specific form of faith, or assume the claims of any to be determined. It declines to consider it a closed question that the claims of any religion are to be regarded as finally established, and gives a fair, open field for the establishing of any religion, or of so much of any religion as can prove itself to be true. Christianity, thus far, has attempted to convert all other religions to itself. The Christian missionary goes to India and says to the natives there, "You must be converted to my faith, or there is no hope of your progress to anything better in this world or of your happiness in the world to come." This Association says to these native religious devotees, "Let us see what is true in your religion, and what is true in this and that other form of faith, and be ready to accept the true from any quarter : and, meantime, let us put our heads together, and see if we cannot contrive some better and worthier ways of living." The Free Religious Association simply does not accept any instituted form of religion as necessarily a finality. It admits the possibility of a advance in religious truth beyond any present religious system. It plants itself on *Truth-seeking*, and does not claim to have found a finality in religious faith and practice.

On this broad basis, with this declaration of equal religious liberty and rights, the Free Religious Association is organized ; and it is evident that the specific objects of the Association, as stated in its constitution, must take direction and shape from these fundamental principles. The Association aims "to promote the interests of pure religion," without stamping those interests with any special name, or seeking to build up any sectarian form of faith and worship. It aims "to encourage the scientific study of theology," not fearing to trust reason and free inquiry on all fields of thought, not recalling them when they reach the limits of the "Christian," or any other special confession of faith, but striving to apply a more truly rational and scientific method of investigation to all problems of religious experi-

ence and history. It aims "to increase fellowship in the spirit," — defining that fellowship as nothing narrower than the brotherhood of man, and making it rest on the aspirations and strivings of our common humanity after higher truth and life.

Now the *instrumentalities* which the Association might legitimately use for accomplishing these objects are not few nor small: though it is evident that in adjusting them much wisdom will be needed in order not to violate on either hand the principles on which the Association is organized. But certainly it should not be deemed impracticable for the Association to find any means to accomplish its objects, except the agency of an annual meeting like that to be held to-morrow. Such a meeting, bringing together for perfectly free speech and conference the representatives of various religious opinions and organizations, will doubtless do something towards effecting each of the objects which the Association has in view. It seems impossible that these persons, however variant in belief, should thus come together for a few hours on equal grounds, each honestly to utter his own conviction, and honestly to hear another's equally sincere conviction, and go away again without having for each other's position and faith more of toleration and respect, and without discovering that there may be other points and ties of religious fellowship than unity of creed. The practical influence of the Association need not, therefore, necessarily be small, even though its work should be confined to providing, and printing the proceedings of, one meeting a year. But if one meeting can be held, and is so useful, why not more? And if a meeting can be held in Boston, why not in other places? This instrumentality of public meetings, like or similar to this annual convention, though perhaps in general with less of formality and arrangement, may certainly legitimately be multiplied.

But the public meeting as a means of reaching public opinion, especially in large cities, is becoming of less and less importance, as the modern agency of the printing-press develops its gigantic power. And it would be strange if an organization so modern in its conception, and so progressive in its aims, as the Free Religious Association, should not avail itself of this peculiar instrumentality of the nineteenth century. On adopting this instrumentality, the question, it is true, would immediately arise, "What shall the Association print? Shall it publish without any attempt at discrimination or selection, a conglomerate of all the religious opinions and speculations that might be found both in and out of Christendom?" The *theoretical* answer to this question is ready at hand, being given in the principles just discussed, on which the Association is organized. The Association may

legitimately print anything that comes within the aim and scope of those fundamental principles, — that seeks to promote the interests of pure religion, unadulterated with any sectarian or dogmatic purpose; that applies rational and scholarly methods to religious problems; and that endeavors to effect a religious fellowship, combined with the largest individual liberty, on the ground of common aspirations after truth and righteousness, rather than of common theological opinions. Though the Association has no system of truth to promulgate as a finality, no *fixed set* of opinions to propagate, yet there are truths which it may publish, inquiries and meditations of deeply thoughtful and religious men which it may give to the world, results of scholarly investigation which it may be the medium of presenting to the people. The test in this matter of publication which the constitution establishes, is, in fine, not that a writing should harmonize with a certain standard of opinion, but that it should proceed from a reverent religious purpose, — a *religious and not a sectarian* purpose, — and that it should show ability and fairness of treatment. And it should not be impossible to find persons so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of these principles on which the Association is based, as to be able *practically* to answer the question, “What to print?” whenever it arises, without violating that spirit; to solve it so as to preserve the large liberty and free opportunity which the Association offers, and at the same time to protect it both from obsolete dogmatic speculations on the one hand, and crude, ill-digested speculations on the other.

But aside from questions of theological belief, on which there is most dispute, and would be, therefore, the most difficulty in the adjustment of practical methods, there is much other matter which this Association might appropriately publish. The subject which is to be discussed in our Convention to-morrow evening — “The Relations of Religion to Philanthropy and Social Reform” — is a subject which needs in its various aspects to be presented directly to the people through the agency of the printing-press. And there is another vast field of thought and labor, as yet but little explored, — connected with that of philanthropy and social reform, yet hardly lying within it, contiguous also to the field occupied by the Social Science Association, yet involving more directly and individually than that the obligations and sanctities of religion, — concerning which this Association might properly endeavor both to get light and to give light. The field referred to is that of home and social life. What can be done to lift our homes off of the plane of mere material provision and physical drudgery, where so many of them now are, and to infuse into them a stronger element of intellectual and moral purpose? What can be

done to elevate society above its present intellectual and moral barrenness, and make it fruitful in stimulus to mental effort and to higher achievements in character and life? The question may be extended to ask. What can be done to consecrate material enterprise and to purify trade, so that they shall be made to subserve the intellectual and spiritual destiny of man? If any one can say anything to help solve these questions, the Free Religious Association can do no fitter work than scatter the answer broadcast, so that it may go into every home and every shop and counting-room in America. The Association might properly ask for careful reports on these subjects from persons competent to the task, the reports to be made a part of its public meetings and afterwards printed. And it might, also, publicly solicit essays bearing on the solution of these questions, — *prize essays*, if funds for the purpose should be put into its hands.

The suggestion that the devising of methods for elevating the tone of home and social life is one of the legitimate works of this Association, gives hint of another of its possible practical agencies, which, for want of a better title, may here be called the *social instrumentality*. In every community and neighborhood where there are persons, few or many, who are interested in the principles and objects of this Association, let such persons be encouraged to come together, in their parlors or in a hall, for free conference and consultation on all questions involved in these principles and objects. Especially could such groups do good service in forwarding the aim last mentioned, — that of improving the condition of domestic and social life. And these groups would naturally seek to put themselves into communication with the Executive Committee of this Association as a central bureau for both collecting and imparting information. The Association might furnish them, so far as they should wish, with its published reports and essays, and they in turn would furnish it with the results of their own efforts and experience, which would become a valuable element in the preparation of other reports and documents. And so in the freest way, with the least possible machinery, and yet in perfect accord with scientific methods, these scattered social groups would become active centres of influence in sustaining and carrying forward the work of the Association.

Such is a summary of the agencies through which the Free Religious Association may appropriately attempt to accomplish its objects. Others may be developed in the progress of time, for its methods must be left as free as are its principles. But these — the public meeting, the printing-press, and the social instrumentality as above defined — seem to be in accord with present demands, and to grow naturally out

of the principles on which the Association is based. It is not proposed to set up or to use any ecclesiastical machinery; for it is not the object of the Association to build up a new sect, nor will it compromise itself with any existing sect.

And as a special argument in favor of the immediate and zealous adoption of these measures for practical work, in addition to what has been said above on general principles, — an argument which it would seem should have weight with all religious people of whatever name, — let it here be stated that there are vast numbers of people who will listen to moral and religious appeals coming from this free Association, but whose ears are closed against all appeals that come with the stamp of any specific religious name, whether “Christian” or other. Justly or unjustly, they have decided so firmly against the claims of the “Christian” system of religion that there is no breaking through that decision. Their reason and self-respect have been so offended by common methods and assumptions of the Christian Church, that they are suspicious of every approach that is made under the countersign of that name, and throw themselves at once into an attitude of resistance. Now must not every person who sincerely desires the moral and spiritual good of his fellows, admit, that for this class of people, at least, the claims of the name, even though capable of proof, may be held in abeyance, while an attempt is made to reach and develop in some way the natural spiritual instincts and aspirations? Many of these people are longing, not to say suffering, for the gospel of free truth and light and love. Many of them, through no help outside of their own souls, have found that gospel; and though no church owns them, and the popular creeds brand them as heretic and infidel, they feel themselves owned of God, and are full of trust and peace. But many are wandering, groping in the dark, feeling themselves alone, needing moral and intellectual help, and still more, needing brotherly sympathy and encouragement; while their energies, for the want of being directed to some high moral purpose, are likely to run to waste and corruption in material and sordid pursuits. American society is suffering from this cause more than the religious community seems to be conscious of, — from this secret, deep-seated scepticism in respect to the instituted beliefs and forms of religion, and want of a fixed and earnest religious faith in the place of that which has gone. And some other appliances appear to be needed to reach the disease than those in use among the established sects, — appliances as free and elastic and progressive as is American society itself. The Free Religious Association, with its principles and objects, so large and spontaneous and democratic, should be able to do something to supply this need. Its foremost and constant

aim should be to help develop a religion in America commensurate with America's boundless political and material opportunities, — a religion that should thoroughly penetrate and mould all civil institutions, consecrate and spiritualize material enterprise and wealth, and produce a faith in ideas, and a fidelity to moral conviction, and a practical love and charity, which, manifested in the daily life and character of millions of human beings, should outvie in grandeur the majesty and power of the continent itself.

Now whether the Association shall attempt much or little of this practical work, will depend on the amount of financial support which it shall receive. Something very useful may be done even with small means; but if the Association is to take the position and use the opportunities indicated in this report, then it will need a great increase of funds over what it has received, or was expected to receive, the past year. And since it has been intimated that there are persons of wealth who are interested in the general objects of the Association, and are ready to contribute to its funds, if some definite and practical measures, of which they can see the utility, can be proposed, it may be well to close this Report with a concise statement of certain things that need to be done, and may be done as soon as the means are provided.

First, — rooms are needed in Boston for head-quarters of the Association. This need has been felt even with the small operations of the past year; and if the Association is going to increase its activities much, a place for head-quarters will be absolutely necessary. A Free Religious Reading-room — free in every sense, especially in being open on Sunday — might be advantageously connected with such place; and the rooms not only be open for the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Association, but furnish a convenient place for any persons interested in similar objects to meet and consult together.

Second, — a publication-fund is needed for the printing and distribution of such matter as the Association may appropriately circulate in furtherance of its aim.

Third, — a system of permanent lectures, on the basis of the principles of this Association, might advantageously be established in Boston, open and free to all comers, but designed especially for the students of the various theological schools situated in Boston and vicinity. The lectures should be by the ablest men to be found for the purpose, and the arrangement of them might be somewhat after the manner of the Lowell Institute.

Fourth, — a weekly religious newspaper — religious in the broad significance of the word as defined by this Association — is greatly

needed ; a paper for the people, yet able and scholarly in its editorship, perfectly free, candid, reverent, and progressive. Such an enterprise, however, is not to be set on foot hastily. Its financial as well as intellectual basis should first be well assured.

So much for specific practical measures that may be undertaken in addition to the general work previously mentioned, if the requisite funds be furnished. Yet it is not desirable, perhaps, that all these and kindred enterprises should be concentrated in the one agency of this Association. Its principles, indeed, would rather oppose an extreme system of concentration, and favor individual enterprise. The Association does not care so much to have a paper under its control as its organ, as that a paper should be published by somebody as the organ of its ideas and objects ; nor is it so desirous to have the direction of a free religious Institute, as that such an Institute be established. It need not shrink from an attempt to help inaugurate these enterprises, if its aid be asked. But it will be content if it can do anything to stimulate individual minds to such undertakings, and to provide a constituency in public opinion for their support. Indeed, whether the direct, practical agencies of this Association are many or few, it will not fail entirely of its objects, if it shall help mankind in any way to more faithful thinking, to higher aspiration, and to purer living.

Brothers and friends, we are banded together in a cause worthy not only to command our devotion, but to enlist our enthusiasm. We are aiming at nothing less than the moral and spiritual brotherhood of humanity. The aim is sublime. We know full well that it is not to be reached at once, — that its full accomplishment is far distant. Yet none of us can now foresee what this Association, though it seem today so small and feeble a beginning, may become, and may achieve, if we and our successors shall remain true to its ideas. From this germ may grow that perfect fellowship of souls in which all mankind, of all nations and races, are to be cemented together under the divine sovereignty and power of one law and one faith and one aspiration. But no Association can effect any good save by individual consecration and effort. This Association, certainly, having such an object, and capable of such a destiny, appeals for our highest personal fealty. It demands our truest thought, our purest purpose, our bravest act and sacrifice.

NOTICE.

A full Report of the Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Free Religious Association, recently held in Boston, will soon be published. It will contain the addresses of Friday morning in Tremont Temple, by —

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM, (President of the Association.)

“ JAS. FREEMAN CLARKE, (Orthodox Unitarian.)

“ ROBERT COLLYER, (Liberal Unitarian.)

“ CHARLES H. MALCOM, (Calvinist Baptist.)

“ JNO. P. HUBBARD, (Episcopalian.)

“ OLYMPIA BROWN, (Universalist.)

“ JOHN WEISS, (Radical.)

It will include also a Report, by WILLIAM J. POTTER, on the “Present Tendencies of Society with regard to Religious Organization and Worship,” with remarks thereon by A. B. ALCOTT, AARON M. POWELL, F. E. ABBOT, MRS. C. H. DALL, J. M. PEEBLES, C. C. BURLEIGH, and others; a Report by F. B. SANBORN, on the “Relations of Religion to Philanthropy and Social Science,” with addresses thereon, by COL. T. W. HIGGINSON, LIZZIE DOTEN, and WENDELL PHILLIPS; and an Appendix containing a paper by the Jewish Rabbi, I. SANGARY NATHANS, D. D., a letter from REV. M. D. CONWAY, on religious movements in England, and a letter from KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, the native Theistic Reformer of India.

Price, 40 cents, on receipt of which copies will be mailed to any address. Package of twelve, \$3.50.

ADAMS & CO., Publishers,

25 Bromfield Street, Boston.

* * * Contributions to the work of the Free Religious Association are solicited from all persons interested, and may be sent to the Treasurer, Richard P. Hallowell, 98 Federal Street, Boston, or to the Secretary, Wm. J. Potter, New Bedford, Mass.